

ABC NEWS- STS-4 LANDING (7-4-1982)

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From Sunday, July 4th, 1982 ABC NEWS Coverage of STS-4, the 4th Space Shuttle Landing at Edwards Air-Force Base in California. President Ronald Reagan was on hand to welcome the astronauts home.

STS-4 CREW:

Commander: Thomas K. Mattingly II

Pilot: Henry W. Hartsfield, Jr.

- Landed at 12:09 PM E.T

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abc news continuing coverage of reach into space now from washington david brinkley we would like to welcome those stations joining us at this point the space shuttle columbia is now approaching edwards air force base in california and will be landing shortly and we are all set up to bring it to you live here's frank reynolds frank thank you david and you saw just a moment ago they're the first pictures of the space shuttle columbia as it neared the california coast astronauts ken mattingly and hank hartsfield have executed a flawless return down through the earth's atmosphere here is the picture of the shuttle from the nasa tracking camera which is at anderson peak california just on the coastline of california and doesn't that baby look nice she's only about uh nine or ten minutes really away from a touchdown that's a long range camera and the space shuttle is still a hundred miles or so away from the actual touchdown point touchdown in eight minutes and 34 seconds she's just crossed the coastline actually just south of santa barbara and will continue straight on almost on a direct line to edwards air force base where there is a large crowd waiting to uh waiting to greet the astronauts including of course president reagan who will be out there today arrived a short while ago these are really the first shots we've had now of the space shuttle columbia since uh she roared off the pad just about exactly one week ago and an hour uh from today last sunday at cape kennedy and the now familiar spectacular launch and the columbia has now successfully gone around the earth completed its mission flawlessly and uh we have lost the picture for just a moment but we've already had uh reacquisition of signal the space craft is in communication with the ground and they've been given the clear clearance for landing here at edwards

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clearance for landing here at edwards air force base on runway 2-2 so now we want to bring in our correspondents who are there at uh the uh edwards air force base first of all we'll get a quick glimpse of the president under an umbrella there a sun shade he and mrs reagan are there on the uh a special platform that's been erected for them to uh watch the return of the columbia and here's some of the crowd we're told there are more than 300 000 people scattered all around this huge sprawling complex to try to get a glimpse of colombia as she comes down let's bring in now lyncher and gene cernan at edwards air force base lin frank good morning as you say it is a perfect day this is also probably the first return of colombia with music you can probably hear a little band music in the background a lot of people here waving a lot of flags it's going to be a little bit different from what we've seen before and gene cernan it's a lot different from white

sands frank it's a great day for a birthday party everyone here is in a jubilant spirit as lin said the flags are flying the president's here and we're all waiting for the return of columbia to come home and that will happen before long you're not very far away from hearing the old sonic boom are you as she goes over we ought to we ought to we expect to hear that boom uh i think we'll hear it probably in the next two or three minutes because the columbia has crossed the coastline and she'll be landing here at about six more minutes everybody here by the way frank is going to be informed of all these things they have imported hugh harris who is the voice of launch control he is out here telling all the visitors the very important visitors exactly what to expect this is also something new for this return of colombia there's a huge banner i don't know if you've seen it yet over on one of the hangars saying welcome home colombia and certainly everybody here feels that way well it certainly is a grand occasion for the uh for nasa to have the president there to have the touchdown come on the fourth of july here's our graphic showing that we have five minutes and 40 seconds or so to go there you can see it now once again again this is from a camera i believe at edwards it's 44 miles away i'm told

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edwards it's 44 miles away i'm told from touchdown seems to be just gliding through the sky and of course colombia is at this point really a glider you know they don't have an opportunity to make more than one pass at the landing strip and on this uh particular landing they will come down on runway two two which is the concrete one way that will be the first time it's some fifteen thousand feet long and about three hundred feet wide but it has plenty of desert on either side and at either end of it so the runway landing here will not quite be uh the same as landing at kennedy space center in florida which of course is what eventually will happen on future shuttle flights gee that's a pretty sight frank uh we were told earlier in houston uh by harold drawn one of the flight directors that there is a bit of a psychological barrier to the astronauts coming down on that concrete runway but uh gene cernan of course that astronaut pilot gene stern and uh had some different feelings about whether concrete would be a psychological barrier oh lynn you know they don't have the time entire expanse of the desert to land in and it's sort of i looked at it as coming home to an aircraft carrier you know exactly where it's going to be and you better be on it and i think that's the way ken looks at it even though they don't have that long run-off that they would have with these piles of sand out here well once they see their target and they've got the spacecraft under control which obviously do at this time uh i think we're going to see a pretty smooth navy landing again gene the angle of descent now they're really coming down fast aren't they the of course the the vehicle is a glider the spacecraft is a glider it doesn't have very large wings as a result it has to maintain a lot of speed to manage its energy and we will see a very steep descent as we have looked at in the past we're still seeing uh it should be about overhead it's 10 miles away and it'll just be a matter of uh 10 or 15 seconds before we may very well pick up that sonic boom and you haven't yet uh been able to see it no we haven't here we go how's that for timing frank he just went over the top obviously i think that's about as loud as we've ever had i'm getting good after a little practice well now we can switch to the headings

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well now we can switch to the headings of everybody else looking up there i think i think we do have some contrails just to the southwest of us over here there it is now you can see the contrail of the shuttle itself [Applause] we have a very good visual it's just just a tremendous day now and i think that's a chase plane camera one chase playing camera up there with it used to be two but the one is providing excellent coverage as you can see gene is it in the big left turn now swinging around it it's in a big sweeping left-hand turn and what it's doing is uh is losing some of its altitude maintaining a proper speed so it has again enough energy to make the runway this is a very critical phase of the maneuver it it will be reaching out about 10 to 15 miles away is before it turns back in frank this concrete runway as you probably know is a bit further off than runway 23 where it's landed the previous two times here at edwards so we are not going to get quite as wonderful a visual sighting as we had before the picture we're seeing here is of the president i noticed by the way that as soon as that sonic boom hit and the spacecraft came into sight everybody got up off the seats they were sitting down before oh you can see the contrails now just behind the uh 18 000 feet now the

spacecraft the president is on a platform with uh several astronauts who have already flown in the shuttle let's see if we can't pick up more communications now between the spacecraft and the ground thank you he's been well briefed out there by previous shuttle pilots turning into a heading uh lined up with the runway now he should be in automatic uh control at this point in time and we'll probably maintain it down through about uh 200 feet 14 000 feet at airspeed 264. i still can't get over that trend the idea of being an automatic sound right to the deck before he takes over 12

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it's always a beautiful sight should be lined up with the runway turning uh in on what we might what we call final at this point in time but she's still about six seven miles away ninety six hundred feet 282 knots ah it's in the land guys now this is what the commander mattingly is referred to as that magic machine called the shuttle look at the escort now frank you can see how steeply she comes ken mattingly will take over at uh 2500 feet for the landing okay he's in automatic guidance he'll be taking over manually here to uh land the aircraft with stick and rudders like normal airplanes are landed 280 knots at 4200 feet 20 000. 2200 feet he should have it manually still at well over 200 knots when he touches down the fans are cheering americans are cheering out here this is really a great birthday party they're getting a play-by-play on the loudspeakers too and is the president going to get a view there's the landing gear she came out yeah there it is she'll just gently come down keep it coming ken keep it coming he's a little down stand by for touchdown there it is touchdown here's the dust the nose will come down gently and this time i expect it'll stay down not like the last time when it certainly weighed up again yeah outstanding job [Applause] outstanding yeah he heard you gene he heard you that's brewster shaw the capcom echoing that outstanding well let's see how much runway he uses now shuttle control here the unofficial landing time seven days one hour nine minutes forty seconds we were able to repeat the unofficial landing time seven days

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landing time seven days one hour nine minutes 40 seconds well we're about 14 seconds early but we lift it off on time frank lifted off 135 milliseconds early frank came down 13 seconds early has he still got some runway left he's got a ways to go there you see the president with that you see bob crippen uh who was on sts-1 just punched the air when that came down he was real happy he's got his own craft going up sts seven he'll be commanding this is a pretty good way to impress the commander in chief eyes come to a stop well that was a hard service runway i think which is a another milestone frank in the development of the uh the usefulness of the shuttle uh that says we can come down on hard service runways and there's a lot of them around the world to land in if we have to actually they were unable to make use of the opportunity that they wanted uh to bring it down in the crosswind landing well crosswind landing is probably the one single thing left from this test uh phase but as i understand uh shuttle is going to be landing here uh both columbia and then challenger for the next couple landings and i think they'll get a shot at it this of course makes it operational frank this is uh the end of the test flights for colombia that's right now goes into the the end of the test flights and now off into the operational here's a replay now videotape of the columbia as she comes in for her fourth return from space and it is like a monument out there frank as you well know because you've been right here next to it you know the landing gear came out a little bit earlier this time but that again is just an energy management consideration depends on their air speed and altitude well it was a flawless descent and certainly a a flawless landing you're right gene the nose does stay down this time didn't it all right as we look at the viewing stand there with the president and the various trucks going out now to secure the columbia who's come down we'll pause for just a moment our coverage of space shuttle columbia will

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coverage of space shuttle columbia will continue in a moment let's have another quick look at the time remaining to us of columbia as she came back just a few minutes ago at edwards air force base in california well here you see the spacecraft is down on the ground and the trucks are already beginning to move in to secure her but here is the spacecraft as she made the descent you can see the chase plane right alongside

coming in in a flawless landing the mountains in the distance she was still at some height here and still in that very very steep drop coming down to only 2500 feet before the pilot ken mattingly took over there's the flare out and bringing her on down so columbia has landed you're watching a videotape of the landing that took place just a moment ago the president will go out to greet the astronauts as they step down from their space plane that'll be in about half an hour and we'll be back on the air to bring you that event later we'll also broadcast the president's speech at the edwards air force base we're going to pursue our regular programming now for most of the stations with us in the east and midwest that means we'll pick up with the remainder of the david brinkley broadcast one minute from now more space coverage later for now this is frank reynolds in washington the special report came to you from abc news we now resume our regular program schedule after this from our local stations news this morning with steve bell and kathleen sullivan wake up to all the latest news business reports sports and weather what you need to know to begin your day just before good morning america abc news this morning uniquely qualified to bring you the world

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